

Water Water Everywhere

By Carl C. Stafford
Extension Agent

While it's great to have soil moisture now and some increase in stream flows, recent rainfall is sure to lull us into complacency about surface and ground water supplies. I admit our water situation does look pretty good, if you forget about what it took to get us where we are today. Rainy days don't necessarily mean the drought is over.

It will take as long to get out of this drought as it took to get into, maybe longer. State water experts have spoken at local meetings on water and report the drought

to now be three years old. Try not to be surprised if next summer is worse than what we just went through. Farmers agree that a wet winter is needed to avoid a drought next summer.

It will take a significant reversal of seasonal rainfall trends to begin a correction of our declining groundwater levels. October 2002 made a good start in the right direction, but it is not enough. Percolation rates through soil and underlying rock require months, and or years, for recharge to occur here in the Piedmont. People tell me of springs that dried up this past spring and con-

tinue dry now. Some springs quit in mid-summer and continue to be dry. Believe it or not some people are still hauling water to their livestock and may yet be forced to sell.

In contrast to the slow recharge rates just mentioned, modern wells and high pressure pumps allow us to move water out of the aquifer faster than it goes in, and interestingly enough, most people expect to be able to continue this type of pumping despite drought conditions. There is a disconnect here between removal and recharge. Conservation comes to us slowly, and

many must experience shortage before the idea makes sense.

With a 71-year record low flow measured on the Rapidan at Somerville Ford, many springs dry for the first time, the weather rock still showing at the south end of Lake Pelham, a three year drought currently in effect, and the demands on ground and surface water increasing daily, let's learn about and practice conservation for the long run. There are more of us wanting to use a water supply that is limited and which also decreases during drought.

Enrollment for George Washington Carver-Piedmont Education Center

TUITION REQUIRED IN ADVANCE

Make check or money order payable to: **Orange County School Board**

Detach and return with payment to: Office of Continuing Education,
GWC-PEC, 9432 James Madison Hwy.
Rapidan, VA 22733.

Name: _____ Gender: ____ M ____ F

Address: _____
Street Name City State Zip Code

Daytime Phone (____) _____ Evening Phone (____) _____

Please enroll me in the following classes:

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|-------------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| _____ | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | _____ | _____ |

Method of Payment: M.O. ____ Check ____ Cash ____

Culpeper County's Employee of the Year Peggy Crane Deputy Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Peggy Crane joined the County in 1983 when the County Administration was located in the Courthouse, and the staff consisted of the County Administrator, Finance Clerk and Peggy. She was hired as the Administrative Secretary to the Board and the County Administrator and was officially given the title Deputy Clerk of the Board in 1997.

Today she is responsible for many duties including the Board of Supervisors' agenda for each meeting. This includes gathering any necessary information needed or requested by the Board to make an educated decision. She also handles all citizen complaints and requests concerning the Board and is a wealth of information regarding the County.

After attending three consecutive years of training, Peggy attained the Municipal Clerks Certificate in 1999 and has entered into the Master's Clerk Program. She attends the State

Clerk's Conference and the Clerk's Academy annually to obtain further experience in her work field. In recognition of her commitment to the County, Peggy was awarded Employee of the Year, and was presented a certificate, a reserved parking space, an extra paid day off, and a check for \$100 at the County Employee Appreciation picnic.



Peggy Crane

Photo by Chasity Groves

Culpeper County Awarded Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting For Fourth Consecutive Year

In our ongoing quest to be the best small government in the Commonwealth, Culpeper County has sought and earned, for a fourth consecutive year, the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001.

This award is given by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition for excellence in state and local government financial reporting. In order to

be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

We can be very proud of this award. All government must be accountable to its people and, we the people, especially appreciate accountability in spending tax dollars.

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Presented to

County of Culpeper,
Virginia

For its Comprehensive Annual
Financial Report
for the Fiscal Year Ended
June 30, 2001

A Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is presented by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada to government units and public employee retirement systems whose comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFRs) achieve the highest standards in government accounting and financial reporting.



William R. H. H. H.
President
Jeffrey L. Esser
Executive Director

Dave Maddox Participates in American Bar Association Panel

County Attorney gives opinion in Washington

On October 18, 2002, in Washington, D.C., Culpeper County Attorney, Dave Maddox, participated in a panel discussion sponsored by the American Bar Association on the topic "National Security and Civil Liberties: One Year Later". Other panelists included Defense and Justice Department officials, law professors, and criminal defense attorneys.

The discussion focused on whether the President's statutory and regulatory initiatives to implement homeland security, such as holding suspected terrorists without the normal protections afforded criminal defendants, unduly imposed on civil liberties. It was Mr. Maddox's opinion that this dispute must be resolved promptly so that federal resources could be focused on preventing terrorist activity.



Dave Maddox
Culpeper County Attorney

From Your Commissioner of the Revenue
By Terry L. Yowell

In 1998 the General Assembly enacted the Personal Property Tax Relief Act (PPTRA), which provides a percentage of relief from personal property taxes otherwise payable on the first \$20,000 of value for qualifying vehicles. Qualifying vehicles for the program include passenger cars, motorcycles, pickup and panel trucks (under 7,501 pounds) owned or leased by a natural person and used for non-business purposes. Tax billings are offset by a percentage rate set in the Act and then the locality receives funding from the State to cover the reduced tax collections.

- To qualify a vehicle must be:
- owned by an individual or leased by an individual under a contract requiring the individual to pay the personal property tax
 - AND
 - be used 50% or less for business purposes

Motor homes, trailers and farm use vehicles **do not** qualify for tax relief.

In 1998 the localities billed taxpayers and when payment was made 12.5% of the tax was reimbursed to the taxpayer for the State by the Department of Motor Vehicles. In following years the taxpayer saw a reduction in the amount of tax to be paid on their tax bills based on percentage rates set by the

State. In 1999 the percentage rate was 27.5%, in 2000 the rate was 47.5%, 2001 the rate was 70%, and in 2002 the rate is 70% of tax to be paid by the State. All together the State has reimbursed an estimated \$1,933,000,000.

In 2002 The General Assembly enacted HB 29 requiring the Virginia State Tax Commissioner to establish a Personal Property Tax Relief Compliance Task Force composed of representatives of the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Accounts, the Auditor of Public Accounts, local governments, local Treasurers, Commissioners of the Revenue, and Directors of Finance. The Task Force recommended to the Tax Commissioner a program designed to increase taxpayer compliance with the Personal Property Tax Relief Act.

The 2002 General Assembly also enacted HB 30, which requires the Department of Taxation to develop and implement, not later than January 1, 2003, a comprehensive Personal Property Tax Relief Act Compliance Program. The objectives of the program are: 1) to enhance taxpayer knowledge and compliance with PPTRA, and 2) establish cost-effective verification and audit procedures. HB 30 authorizes the Virginia State Tax Commis-

sioner to promulgate administrative guidelines to implement the PPTRA Compliance Program.

HB 30 will mean several things for the residents of Culpeper County. First of all there will now be limitations upon the qualifications for relief at the time of:

- Vehicle titling
- Vehicle renewal registration
- Local motor vehicle licensing
- Personal property tax assessment
- Personal property tax billing

In order to comply with the Personal Property Tax Relief Act it is very important for taxpayers to report the use of their vehicle each year to the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office. If you can answer YES to any of the following questions, your motor vehicle is considered by State Law to have a business use and does NOT qualify for Car Tax Relief.

Is more than 50% of the mileage for the year used as a business expense for Federal Income Tax purposes OR reimbursed by an employer?

Is more than 50% of the depreciation associated with the vehicle deducted as a business expense for Federal Income Tax purposes?

Is the cost of the vehicle expensed pursuant to Section 179 of the Internal Revenue Service Code?

Is the vehicle leased by an individual and the leasing company pays the tax without reimbursement from the individual?

This information is required to help us determine a fair and equitable assessment of your personal property.

If you have any questions or need additional information about the Personal Property Tax Relief Act, HB 29 and /or HB 30 or your qualification and / or assessment ,please do not hesitate to contact me at 540-727-3443 or tyowell@co.culpeper.va.us.

**County Offices
Holiday Schedule**

The following holiday schedule has been set by Governor Warner, and pursuant to the Board's Bylaws, the County will follow the State's holiday Schedule.

- Christmas:**
Tuesday, December 24th - Offices Closed
Wednesday, December 25th - Offices Closed
New Year's:
Wednesday, January 1, 2003 - Offices Closed

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program

The Department of Environmental Services will hold it's 2nd Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day in the Spring of 2003. As in the past, the collection will be open to county residents only, and not to commercial or industrial customers. Residents are encouraged to keep hazardous chemicals, prod-

ucts and other material in their original containers for disposal. Typical household hazardous wastes include: paints, thinners, pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, pool chemicals, gasoline, unwanted fuels, pool chemicals, and many others. Some items that will not be accepted include: ammunition,

explosives, gas cylinders, radioactive materials, medical waste, and commercial or industrial waste. Look for the official date and location, as well as detailed information on acceptable materials in the spring 2003 issue of the Culpeper Minutes!

***Second Annual
Household Hazardous Waste Collection
Day will be held in
spring 2003.***

Culpeper County Library

Join the Friends of the Culpeper County Library Sunday, December 8 for a Book Discussion and a dinner.

Henry Wiencek, author of *The Hairstons: An American Family in Black and White*, will speak at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, December 8, in the Culpeper County Library meeting room. The Corner Shelf Bookstore will have his book for sale, and Mr. Wiencek will autograph copies after his talk. Sunday dinner will follow at approximately 4:00 p.m. Tickets will be \$8.00 and will be on sale November 8 at the circulation desk. The Hairston family was one of the wealthiest families of slaveholders in the South, owning plantations in Virginia, North Carolina and Mississippi. In the course of Wiencek's research into old plantation houses, he was introduced to the black Hairstons. The complex relationships between the black and white branches of the family make a compelling story.



Wiencek was series editor of the Smithsonian Guide to Historic America and has published several books on Southern history. He is currently working on a biography of George Washington. His book on the Hairstons has been nominated for the National Book Critics' Circle Award in biography.

“CAN YOUR FINES”

From November 15 to December 15, you may “**CAN YOUR FINES**” by bringing in one can of food for each overdue item or fine, and that overdue item or fine will be forgiven. Patrons with a previous fine on their records may bring in one can of food per fine, and the charge will be forgiven. (This will not include Collection Agency Accounts.) All proceeds go to the Community Christmas Basket Program to help local families for the Holidays.



The Library offers **Bedtime Storytimes** each Tuesday at 7:00 pm. Walk-in events suitable for the whole family, Bedtime Storytimes will feature interactive storytelling, songs, and activities for pre-school and school-age children. Children are invited to wear pajamas and slippers and to bring their favorite teddy bears. The Library staff will also present one Bedtime Storytime each month as a Holiday Special, so mark your calendars for December 17 for a special Christmas Story Time!

Bedtime Storytimes are free, and registration is not required. For more information, call Diana Cmeyla or Susanna Spencer at 825-8691.



Homework Help is available! Get help with your homework from the live online tutors at Tutor.com. Available from 6 - 11 p.m. nightly through your library's website at <http://tlc.library.net/culpeper> and check out our other links to school assignments. There is even practice for the SOLs.

Friends of the Library Bookstore Hours:

Monday: 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Thursday: 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Also, look over our offerings on the bookstore shelf, located to the right as you enter the Library. Donations of new or used books are accepted during all regular library hours. If you would like to volunteer, please call Jean Harris at 829-4950.

Need a Christmas gift? Try honoring someone with a leaf on the Giving Tree located in the Meeting Room at the Library. Applications are available at the Circulation Desk. Or, try one of our big, roomy canvas bags and fill it with books from our bookstore.

Morningstar® Mutual Funds

Summary Section: Updated every 2 weeks with new commentary, star ratings, and summary performance information on 1,600 funds
Analysis Section: 160 new full-page reports, including Morningstar analyst opinions and recommendations, updated every two weeks.
How to Invest in Mutual Funds: a resource guide to smart fund selection using Morningstar Mutual Funds.
Morningstar and Value Line are both located at the Information Desk.

The Builders' Corner *by Bill Myers*

On October 10th the County Administrator, Frank Bossio, and the Building Inspection Office held a meeting with the area builders and tradesmen to discuss ideas for service improvements. With the large number of homes being built in the County and the size of the Building Inspection Office, it is apparent that County staff cannot keep up with the volume of inspections.

The Board of Supervisors approved the hiring of two (2) additional inspectors at its September meeting. Hiring more inspectors would seem to be the key to providing better service; however, with the hiring process and training time involved to get a new inspector "on the street", an obvious time lag would exist. The meeting was intended to explore new ideas about how County staff and the building public could work together to relieve some of the time-sensitive inspection backlog.

The meeting was well attended with approximately 30 builders and tradesmen present. Many suggestions were made. Many questions were asked and answered. As was agreed, staff studied those suggestions, and the results of that study are included here.

Many questions and suggestions centered on Third Party Inspections. This is a process that the State has approved for Building Officials to use at their discretion, which allows for the use of "approved" inspectors to supplement the building inspection staff.

At present, 3rd party in-

spectors, who are approved by the Building Official, may inspect footings, concrete slabs, and poured concrete walls, as well as back-fill. The suggestion(s) centered on allowing 3rd party inspectors to be allowed to perform more types of inspections, such as electrical, mechanical and plumbing inspections, as well as framing and final inspections.

The Building Official's Opinion: A complete rewrite of the 3rd party program policy, procedures, qualifications, and application is in order and has been accomplished. As for expanding the program to include all types of inspections, I feel we should learn from the experience of the past 6 months. A few individuals or firms should be approved for inspections so that if the unforeseen happens, we (the County inspection staff) will have a backup system. Additional staff should take care of the current situation, but having one or two firms/individuals that are "certified" to perform trades and framing inspections is something that is needed. Within the month of December a new "Approved" listing of third party inspectors will be completed and will contain firms/individuals qualified to do more types of inspections.

Mr. Bossio spent some time discussing the implementation of new technology for the Department to speed up the administrative functions associated with the inspection process. Yes Virginia, there is a lot of paperwork associated with inspec-

tions. These changes will improve workflow and allow the field inspectors a little more time in the field.

A new computer system, consisting of handheld computers, will be in the trucks of the Inspector so that instantaneous recording of the inspection results will be possible. We forecast that with this new system, which links to the internet, it will be possible for the builder to schedule an inspection, discover the results of the last inspection, and review the history of inspections for a particular job. This information can be used in business planning. Once the "bugs", to be expected with any new system, are cleared, we hope to share our system with other jurisdictions. Implementation is scheduled for January 2003.

A suggestion of allowing letters from the trades' contractors stating that "we did it to code and take responsibility" was made.

The Building Official's Opinion: We cannot delegate liability. Since the County has a legal issue of liability, we prefer not to shirk that responsibility. We will continue to monitor this issue in the future.

The meeting was lively, and I have not reported each and every issue. The intent of this and future meetings is to establish a clearinghouse between builders and inspectors. We feel that County staff has knowledge to share with the builders and much to learn from the builders to help make this process work well for both.

The next meeting will be in February, at a date and place to be announced.

"The intent of this and future meetings is to establish a clearinghouse between builders and inspectors."

CULPEPER MINUTES

A Publication of
The Culpeper County
Board of Supervisors



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CULPEPER MINUTES

WINTER 2002



*This poem was written by
Chastity Fletcher,
the thirteen year old cousin of
Brandy Station Fire Chief, Chris Brown.
Chris read Chastity's poem at
the dedication of the memorial wall
at the Clore-English Funeral Home.*

*Chastity and Chris have kindly offered
to share it with us.
Chastity has managed to
express beautifully a lot
of feelings we share
but have not been able to
put into words.*

Remembrance *by Chastity Fletcher*

As we sit back and remember
That terrifying day in September,
We think of families, friends, and strangers,
Lost to us because of your anger.

You hijacked our planes,
And inflicted upon us unimaginable pain.
Why did you take all those innocent lives?
Did you think about motherless children and husbandless wives?

When you sent planes to kill that day,
Didn't you know that you would pay?
If not in this life then in the after,
You will pay for this disaster.

As the buildings crumbled,
And people stumbled.
People on planes called their loved ones and prayed,
Hoping these wouldn't be the last words they would say.

Firemen and women hurried to save,
Trying desperately to get people out before the building could cave.
Most didn't make it out alive,
The ones who did mourn the ones who didn't survive.

We will not let you destroy our nation
That was started by the declaration.
The time from that day grows longer,
Our nation is now stronger.